

CLASSIFICATION MODELS OF THEOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO RELIGIONS

Domenic Marbaniang, CFCC, 2012.

E.C. Dewick, *The Gospel and Other Faiths*, Canterbury Press, 1942. [Principal of St. Andrew's College, Gorakhpur, UP; sent by National Missionary Society. Earlier, (succeeded J.N.Farquhar as) Literary Secretary of YMCA for India, Burma, & Ceylon]

- (1) Conflict—other religions are enemies of the gospel
- (2) Fulfillment—Christianity fulfills the good and true in other religions
- (3) Co-operation—God speaks through non-Christian religions
- (4) Discontinuity—Christian revelation has nothing in common with non-Christian religions.

Alan Race and Gavin D'Costa

Alan Race, *Christians and Religious Pluralism: Patterns in the Christian Theology of Religions* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1982). [Dean of PG Studies, St. Philip's Center, Leicester]

Gavin D'Costa, *Theology and Religious Pluralism: The Challenge of Other Religions* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986). [Professor of Catholic Theology at the University of Bristol, Great Britain.]

- (1) Pluralism
- (2) Inclusivism
- (3) Exclusivism

Paul Knitter, *No Other Name? A Critical Survey of Christian Attitudes Toward the World Religions*, Orbis, 1985. [Paul Tillich Professor of Theology, World Religions and Culture at Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York.]

- (1) Conservative Evangelical
- (2) Mainline, Protestant
- (3) Catholic
- (4) Theocentric

Ajith Fernando, *The Christian's Attitude Toward World Religions*, Tyndale House, 1987.

[Teaching Director at Youth For Christ, Sri Lanka]

- (1) Christianity is unique but salvation can be mediated through other religions.
- (2) Christianity is an equal with other faiths.
- (3) Salvation is through Christ only.

Dennis L. Okholm, Timothy R. Phillips (Gen.Ed.), *Four Views on Salvation in a Pluralistic World (More than One Way, 1995)*, 1996. Both are associate professors of theology at Wheaton College, Illinois.

Throughout 20th Century

1. Discontinuity (Hendrik Kraemer)
2. Fulfillment (John Farquhar)
3. Mutual Appreciation (William Hocking)

After Alan Race and Gavin D'Costa's works in the 1980s

1. Exclusivism
2. Inclusivism
3. Pluralism

Clark Pinnock (*A Wideness in God's Mercy*, 1992) and John Sanders (*No Other Name*, 1992)

invented the term "Restrictivism" in place of "Exclusivism", for those who will not definitely assert that salvation is available outside special revelation. Both terms have accrued negative connotations of arrogance, intolerance, and closed-mindedness.

Okholm and Phillips propose "Particularism" as a more appropriate term.

1. Normative Pluralism: All ethical religions lead to God (John Hick) [Vs. Descriptive Pluralism]
2. Inclusivism: Salvation is universally available, but is established by and leads to Christ (Clark Pinnock)
3. Post-Enlightenment Particularism: Salvation in Christ. Agnosticism regarding those who haven't heard the Gospel (Alister McGrath)
4. Evidentialist Particularism: Salvation in Christ Alone.

Paul Knitter, *Introducing Theologies of Religions*, Orbis Books, 2002.

- (1) Replacement (Traditionally called *Exclusivism*)
- (2) Fulfillment (Traditionally called *Inclusivism*)
- (3) Mutuality (earlier called *Pluralism*) – Common Ground (the Real), Common Core (Religious Experience), Common Goal (Salvific liberation), Rough parity of all religions
- (4) Acceptance (No Common Ground; Religions are as different as the languages they use, Cf. Wittgenstein)

David Basinger, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2004. [Roberts Wesleyan College, NY]

- (1) Religious Exclusivism. The religious perspective of only one basic theistic system (for instance, only one of the major world religions) or only one of the variants within a basic theistic system (for instance, within Christianity) is truth or at least closer to the truth than any other religious perspective on a given issue.
- (2) Religious Non-Exclusivism. The religious perspective of any basic theistic system or variant thereof is superior to all other religious perspectives on a given issue.
- (3) Religious Pluralism. Not only is it (as a non-exclusivist) that no specific religious perspective is superior but also the religious perspectives of more than one basic theistic system or variant thereof are equally close to the truth.

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21st Century:

Particularism has to a great extent blended into Inclusivism (Modal Inclusivism). The present chief “Christian” theological approaches seem to be:

- (1) Humanistic Pluralism (Mutual Respect, Peaceful Co-existence, Dialogue towards peace, Humanitarianism)
- (2) Inclusive Particularism (Contextual Theologizing, Structural Indigenization, Dialogue for mutual understanding (learning), Witness in Word and Deed).
- (3) Fundamentalism (Fundamental Discontinuity, Religio-Culturism, *Religious Conversionism* (explicit)).

Christ-unlike Mission Models

1. Detachment from the “lost”; catering to the apathetic. (Luke 15; 19:20, Matt 9:12, 23:14; James 1:27).
2. Denominationalism, Quantificationism, Subordinationism, Nominalism (Luke 9:50, Gal.1:16-24, 1Chron 21:1, Acts 8:4, Matt 23:15).
3. Deceptive and Disguise Models (Rom.16:18).
4. Demand and Supply Models (1Thess 2:6,7; 1Pet.5:2).
5. Dictatorial Models (1Pet.5:3).

Christ-like Mission Models

1. Incarnation Model (Heb. 2:14; 1Cor.9:22)
2. Sacrificial Model (Gal.1:20; Phil.2:17; 1Thess 2:6, 9)
3. Reconciliation Model (Eph.2:14; 2Cor.5:18; Rom.5:1; Gal.3:28; John 17:21)
4. Glorification (Uplifting, Dignifying) Model (John 17:22; Eph.3:8-11; 2Cor.8:9).